Essay Exam Pass Rate Plummets; Math Rate Rises

By Christopher Failing

Freshmen will be able to take a combined Calculus I and II this year as part of changes to the core curriculum.

New, shorter versions of Calculus I (18.01) and Calculus II (18.02) have been added to the curriculum. The introduction of the new Calculus I (18.01A) along with its counterpart, Calculus II (18.02A) will allow freshmen to complete a six-week version of 18.01. The remaining six weeks cover the first portion of 18.02, said Joanne E. Johnson, academic administrator for Organization of Mathematics. The remainder of 18.02 can be completed during other independent activities Period or the spring semester.

The purpose of 18.01A is to provide a quick review of 18.01 for students who have taken a full year of calculus in high school, said Professor of Mathematics Arthur P. Mattuck, the instructor for the first six weeks.

"18.01A/18.02A will be good for a lot of students with advanced placement but feel their background is a bit rusty and could benefit from a six-week review of calculus," Mattuck said.

Mathematics Instructor Karen E. Smith will teach the class for the last eight weeks of the fall. The instructor for 18.02A during IAP or the first six weeks in the spring is not yet known.

Mattuck said that it would be "very unreasonable" for a student to be enrolled in both 18.01A/18.02A and 18.011, but said he assumed 8.011 would not be held at the same time in IAP.

3.091 revised significantly

In order to give freshmen the freedom to choose a chemistry course without concerns about potential overlaps, 3.091 has been broadened to include certain topics while maintaining a focus on the solid state, said Professor of Materials Science and Engineering Donald R. Sadoway. A unit on liquids and solutions has been added, Sadoway said, which includes acid-base equilibria and solubility rules.

"These topics have been added to give the student a complete kernel of knowledge about basic chemistry," Sadoway said. To parallel the new topics, "there has been a major initiative to bring forth examples from material-related topics," Sadoway said.

Hope to change requirements

The issue of reorganizing recommendations and requirements that revolve around 3.091 and Principles of Chemical Science (5.11) has not yet been addressed because it would be premature, Sadoway said.

Traditionally, students taking 3.091 choose an engineering major, except for those who plan to be chemical engineers, Sadoway said. Sadoway said that he expects that within MIT, subjects that have always required 5.11 will begin to also accept 3.091 as progress is made with the new core. Sadoway said, "I am hoping that medical schools will recognize 3.091 as an acceptable alternative to 5.11," he added.

City Days Activities Promote Outreach

By Orli G. Bahcall

Today at Kresge Oval, MIT students will load 400 fourth through sixth graders from 14 Cambridge public schools in the fourth annual City Days, said Tracy F. Parvinson, the event's coordinator.

The Public Service Center began the City Days program three years ago in order to encourage new community outreach programs, Parvinson said. Forty groups, including fraternities, sororities, independent living groups, and nine dormitories, have volunteered to run activities for the visiting Cambridge students, Parvinson said.

City Days offers educational events along with sports and crafts, Parvinson said. The educational activities focus on the fun that elementary students can have applying what they learn in school, she said.

Participants will try to package an egg so it will not break after being dropped, Parvinson said. Children will also learn how to build the most aerodynamically sound paper airplane, she said.

Guest speakers include Public Service Center Steering Committee Co-Chair John G. Kasakian '65, Assistant for Community Relations in the President's Office Paul Parvinson, and a representative of the City of Cambridge, Parvinson said. Cambridge Mayor Kenneth Reeves, who is chair of the Cambridge City Planning Committee, may also attend City Days, Parvinson said.

City Days is a "terrific way for the MIT community to show its appreciation," said Paul Parvinson. He added that it was "very reasonable" for a student to be enrolled in both 18.01A/18.02A and 18.011, but said he assumed 8.011 would not be held at the same time in IAP.

Exams, Page 13

Freshmen Can Take Combined Calculus

By David D. Hsu

Freshmen passed the Freshmen Essay Evalua- tion this year, down from 48 percent last year. The Committee on the Writing Requirement decided to raise the passing score, resulting in the pass rate drop, said Coordinator for the Writing Requirement Leslie C. Perelman. However, 56 percent of freshmen passed their Pre-Calculus Mathematics II test, up from 49 percent last year. Additionally, students on average finished the math exam in one-third the time as last year.

Reaction mixed

It is "very awkward to have only 17 percent passing the test," said Ronald S. Demon '99, who did not pass the essay evaluation. The passing rate gives the impression that "this class is not as strong as previous years," said Perelman. The Institute "should have a consistent grading system from year to year," Demon said. Because the exams come after a summer away from school, freshmen may not be fully prepared, said Cheryl M. Howell '99. "It took me a while to remember what to do," Howell said. "When you're thrust back into it, you don't know what to do."

In general, the exams were pretty straightforward, Howell said. The math diagnostic was "a bit more difficult than the practice exam," said Demon, who passed the test. But, "it was pretty fair," he said.

Stricter cutoff for essays

In terms of how students did on the essay evaluation and the quality of the essays, "it was the same as last year," Perelman said.

In general, students were pretty who were not enrolled in both 18.01A and 18.02A. The test was also not acceptable to 5.11, he said. "It is "very unreasonable" for a student to be enrolled in both 18.01A and 18.02A and 5.11 but said he assumed 8.011 would not be held at the same time in IAP.

of the Middlesex Community College, said the test was "very fair," he said. "It is very awkward to have only 17 percent passing the test," said Ronald S. Demon '99, who did not pass the essay evaluation. The passing rate gives the impression that "this class is not as strong as previous years," said Perelman. The Institute "should have a consistent grading system from year to year," Demon said. Because the exams come after a summer away from school, freshmen may not be fully prepared, said Cheryl M. Howell '99. "It took me a while to remember what to do," Howell said. "When you're thrust back into it, you don't know what to do."

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In terms of how students did on the essay evaluation and the quality of the essays, "it was the same as last year," Perelman said. However, only 173 students taking the exam were pretty who were not enrolled in both 18.01A and 18.02A. The test was also not acceptable to 5.11, he said. "It is "very unreasonable" for a student to be enrolled in both 18.01A and 18.02A and 5.11 but said he assumed 8.011 would not be held at the same time in IAP.

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Indian Minister Killed in Bombing

NEW DELHI, INDIA

In India's highest-level political assassination in four years, B. Sant, speaker of the Punjab Assembly, was killed Thursday when a powerful bomb exploded as he climbed into his limousine. Twelve others died in the blast, for which a Sikh separatist group claimed responsibility.

Sant, 54, was a key political ally of Chief Minister Capt. Parkash Singh Badal, whose cabinet is in the Process of a major reshuffle.

The blast occurred off the city road leading to the central secretariat in Chandigarh, the city that serves as Punjab's administrative capital. As the chief minister got into his car and drove off, the bomb exploded between the two rear wheels of his limousine, killing him instantly.

Sant, the chief minister's chief of staff, was killed in the blast, which shook the entire road.

The blast came in the wake of the recent suicide bomb attack on a temple in Surat, Gujarat, in which 13 people were killed.

In a statement, President Pratibha Patil condemned the attack, saying: "The state government should take immediate action to ensure the safety and security of the people."

The government has announced a day of mourning on Friday and has ordered all government offices to observe a minute's silence in memory of those who died.

The blast is the latest in a series of incidents in the state in recent months, including the Surat temple attack and the bomb attack on a bus in Ahmedabad last month.

The government has launched an investigation into the blast, withhome minister Shinde announcing that a special task force has been set up to probe the case.

Shinde said: "We will do everything possible to catch the culprits and ensure that such incidents do not recur."

The blast occurred on the eve of the local body elections in the state, which are scheduled to be held on October 10. The election is expected to be a crucial test for the ruling Congress party, which faces strong opposition from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

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U.S. Hopes Airstrikes Will Hasten Bosnia Peace Talks

By Tracy Wilkinson

WASHINGTON TIMES

American diplomats are hoping the U.S. military's air strikes on Bosnian Serb targets last week will clear the way for a negotiated settlement of the long-running conflict in the Balkans.

"The air strikes were a clear signal to the Bosnian Serbs that the international community is determined to end the conflict," said Stephen Mollenkopf, director of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The air strikes, which were part of Operation Deny Flight, were aimed at Serb military targets in eastern Bosnia.

The United States, along with other Western nations, has been pushing for a negotiated settlement to the conflict, which has claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions of people.

"The goal is to force the Bosnian Serbs to accept a peace agreement that is acceptable to all parties," said Mollenkopf.

The air strikes, which were carried out by US, French, British and Dutch forces, were designed to deter Serb aggression and to pressure them to negotiate.

"We are not seeking to destroy the Bosnian Serb army," said Mollenkopf. "We are simply seeking to make it clear that our commitment to ending the conflict is real and serious."

The air strikes were followed by a diplomatic push to resume peace talks.

"The United States has been working closely with the European Union and other international partners to ensure that the diplomatic efforts are synchronized," said Mollenkopf.

The International Peace Conference, which is due to begin in Dayton, Ohio, next week, will bring together representatives from all the parties involved in the conflict.

"The United States hopes that the conference will lead to a breakthrough in the peace process," said Mollenkopf.

The peace conference is expected to focus on the key issues of refugees, war crimes, and future security arrangements in Bosnia.

The United States has been pushing for a solution that respects the rights of all the parties involved in the conflict.

"The United States is committed to helping bring an end to the conflict in Bosnia," said Mollenkopf. "We are determined to work with all parties to achieve a durable peace that is acceptable to all of the people of Bosnia."
Gas Additive Reduces Pollution But Fumes Might Cause Illness

By Daniel P. Jones

When environmentalists' officials recently asked food companies to add a tiny amount of a chemical to gasoline, most clean-air advocates urged them to do it as a way to reduce harmful pollution, and many agreed. But a few, though, began sounding a warning that the chemical — methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) — might be causing people to get sick, mostly when they breathed fumes while petro-processing.

At first, health authorities who have been monitoring the lawsuits against the industry's mandate to use MTBE were quick to dismiss such fears. "The evidence didn't show a problem," But later, in December, the nation's health authorities, the Senate, many of the authorities are eagerly taking a harder look at whether the chemical might pose a threat.

A study by The American Heart Association and the American Lung Association showed that people who live near MTBE plants are more likely to have asthma and heart problems.

The suit was filed by Liberty University, the Christian school founded by Rev. Jerry Falwell. The suit claims that the university's athletic program has become a narcotics powerhouse that allegedly finances a political action committee.

"We're holding the university accountable for the harm that its tainted gasoline has caused people," said Peter M. Dooley, the chairman of the rules committee.

The university has been accused of using MTBE as a way to increase its profits.

The NCAA — a bureaucratic institution that governs college sports — has also been under scrutiny. In recent years, exhaustive rules govern nearly every aspect of the athletic program. The NCAA has been vocal about how the rules are enforced.

Then in 1988, in the first of what would be many well-publicized cleaner-fuels programs, the city of Denver required its use in high-octane gasoline because of a state mandate.

But that was not the only time that the rules were re-evaluated and we can avoid a delay in action. If that were the case and we were to allow that to happen, in the interest of fair play, we would have to extend it to other forms of religious expression. Players could count that other form of religious expression — doing the prayer — could be a form of religious expression.

Butch said the prayers are neither prolonged nor self-congratulat-

Shuttle Aide Faults NASA's Turnaround Plan

A NASA plan to turn space shuttle operations over to a private contractor will eliminate vital safety checks and could pose "the biggest threat to the safety of the shuttle and its crew since the Challenger disaster," a veteran NASA operations manager has charged in a letter to President Clinton.

"We're talking about something that we're going to the sidelines. It's not a second volume of the same kind of book, it's not a repeat," he said.

According to Dooley, the chairman of the rules committee, the committee decided on the 15-yard penalty (a second unsportsmanlike conduct call on the same player results in ejection).

A 50-count indictment accuses those indicted range in age from 21 to 54, mostly African-American, of a series of racketeering and narcotics offenses.

The Gangster Disciple forced members to pledge allegiance to the leader, who was convicted in 1977 of murder. He was paroled from prison, enlisting two men who had risen to prominence as gang members.

Federal prosecutors, narcotics, tax and fraud investigators, corrections officials and police officers accused of kidnapping by Canadian authorities. The group includes five men in the top 100 most wanted criminals, including two officers accused of helping another man, Anthony DeSilva, bring his mentally and physically impaired wife Tammy to the United States to prepare for a lawsuit they had filed.

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The Gangster Dis-
Opinion Policy

Editorials, printed in a distinctive format, are the official opinion of The Tech. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of the chairman, editor in chief, managing editor, executive editor, news editors, and opinion editors.

Disagreements, marked as such and printed in a distinctive format, are the opinions of the signed members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial. Columns and editorial cartoons are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper.

Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be typed, double-spaced and addressed to The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, MA 02139-7029, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. Electronic submissions in plain text format may be mailed to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. All submissions are due by 4:30 p.m. two days before the date of publication.

Letters and cartoons must bear the author's signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No letter or cartoon will be printed anonymously without the express prior approval of The Tech. The Tech reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority. Once submitted, all letters become property of The Tech, and will not be returned. We regret we cannot publish all of the letters we receive.

To Reach Us

The Tech's telephone number is (617) 253-1541. Electronic mail is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. Mail to specific departments may be sent to the following addresses on the Internet: helpdesk@the-tech.mit.edu, features@the-tech.mit.edu, sports@the-tech.mit.edu, the-tech-staff@listserv.mit.edu, tech@tech-staff@listserv.mit.edu. Other matters, send mail to general@the-tech.mit.edu and it will be directed to the appropriate person.
May 1993 marked a new era in the 115-year history of The Tech: We started operating a World-Wide Web server, one of the first 100 in the world. Since then, The Tech Archive Team has been breaking new ground in the way newspapers are presented on the Web. And we've made a difference — people around the world are using our tools and our designs.

We're looking for qualified individuals to help us continue to make a difference in three key areas.

**Content developers** are the reporters, editors, and designers of our Web server. They will look for better ways to present news and information to the MIT community.

**Web programmers** create and maintain the tools that keep our online services running smoothly.

**Archivists** concentrate on bringing current issues online, even before the printed edition comes out. Archivists will also work to put some of the oldest issues of The Tech online by scanning microfilm copies.

Joining the Archive Team is a great way to gain Web experience and expand your career opportunities. We presented a paper at the first WWW conference in Geneva, and members of the team have helped produce commercial Web sites for companies like Time Warner. Team members have also created their own Web sites, including a Shakespeare server that is a Best of the Net nominee, an online guide to Kai’s Power Tips, and a collection of classical Greek and Roman texts.

If you want to become part of the Archive Team, send electronic mail to archive@the-tech.mit.edu or stop by our offices on the 4th floor of the Student Center and talk to Dan Stevenson or Jeremy Hylton.
Look What's NEW at MIT Food Service This Fall

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MIT Music Group Auditions

MIT Brass Ensemble
Rehearsals: Tuesday, Thursday, 5:30pm. Killian Hall. Auditions: Monday, September 7, 5:30pm. Bring prepared solo.

MIT Chamber Music Society
First meeting & auditions: Tuesday, September 7, 5pm. Killian Hall. Solo piece required of new members.

MIT Concert Band
Rehearsals: Monday & Wednesday 8-10pm, Kresge. First Meeting and Auditions: Wednesday, September 6, 8pm. Bring prepared solo.

MIT Concert Choir
Rehearsals: Monday, Thursday, 6-8:30pm, Room 2-190. Auditions: Thursday, September 7, 6pm. Group auditions, no solo required.

MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble
Rehearsals: Sunday, 7-11; Wednesday 5:30-7:30pm, Kresge. Auditions & audition sign-up: Wednesday, September 6, 5:30pm. Improvisation preferred, sight-reading from jazz book required.

MIT Symphony Orchestra
Rehearsals: Tuesday, Thursday, 7:30-10pm, Kresge. First meeting: Thursday, September 7 at 7:30pm. Reading through symphonic literature and audition sign up.

MIT Gamelan Galak Tika
Rehearsals: Sunday, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Wednesday, 7pm-10pm. First meeting: Wednesday, September 10, Reh. Room A, Kresge Auditorium, 7pm.

Chamber Chorus will not be offered in 95-96

For more information contact the concerts office at 253-2826.
SAE, Sig Ep Alums Clash over Pledge

By Stacey E. Blau
news editor

A Sigma Alpha Epsilon alumnus and Sigma Phi Epsilon alumnus were involved in an altercation over a new Sig Ep pledge in front of the SAE house late Monday night, said SAE President Jason Prest '96.

A fight ensued but was quickly ended by both sides, with no injuries.

Neal P. Karchem '99, who had a bid from Sig Ep "decided to pledge in front of the SAE house," according to Sig Ep President David J. Penner '96.

"We came out in front [of the SAE house] and started making noise," Penner said.

An SAE member came outside and asked Sig Ep members to quiet down, Prest said. Sig Ep members "pushed around and grabbed him," and an SAE alumni "came out and stepped in," Prest said.

"One of their alumni got into a scuffle with one of our alumni," Penner said.

SAE and Sig Ep members quickly separated the two alumni involved in the fight, Penner said. The fighting lasted "less than 15 seconds before it was broken up," he said.

Neither of the alumni had to be taken to the hospital, and no one was arrested, Penner said.

Tradition goes awry

Traditionally, "a freshman with a bid from a fraternity can call the fraternity from anywhere and say that he wants to pledge," and fraternity members will meet the freshman there to celebrate with cheering and clapping, Penner said.

"There is a custom of not pledging at other fraternities," said Neal H. Dorow, assistant dean and advisor to fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups. "But the freshman may not have known," he said.

Karchem "had been flushed from SAE," Prest said. "We referred him over to Sig Ep," he said. "He prefroshed in our house, but we thought he would be more comfortable [at Sig Ep]," Prest said.

"I think he was a little bitter at it," Prest said. "I don't think it was completely random that he decided to pledge in front of our house. I think he did it for a reason," he said.

Penner said that he does not believe that Karchem decided to pledge in front of the SAE house for any particular reason.

On Wednesday, Dorow met with the presidents and pledge educators of both SAE and Sig Ep.

"We got together with SAE officers and talked it through," Penner said. "We equally share the blame," he said.

"We're not anticipating any punishment" of either fraternities, Dorow said. The "main combatants" were not MIT students, so it would be difficult to punish anyone anyway, he said.

Jet to go but can't get to the workshops? Pick up self-paced Study Guide from the UAA, Room 7-102, Room 7-122, or the Undergraduate Math Office, Room 2-108.

Questions? Call the UAA at x3-4690 or x3-5611.
Jim's Journal

I was reorganizing some books on my bookshelf today.

I made stacks on the floor and tried to put books on the shelf in some kind of order.

Mr. Peterson was sitting on the tallest stack, watching me.

It took me a long time because I kept stopping to read things.

Today I was over at Steve's place.

He showed me some 3-D glasses he still had from when he saw a 3-D movie a long time ago.

"I like 'em," he said. "Sometimes I wish I could just wear them like sunglasses."

But he said he wouldn't do that because people would think he was really weird.

Student Employment is on the Web!

Available positions as well as other information can be accessed at:

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(This page is accessible to the MIT community only.)
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August 30 & 31
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MIT http://web.mit.edu/mcc/www
Computer phone order: 253-1714
Connection email: mcc@mit.edu
Talk Explores Sex, Women
Performances focus on better communication in relationships

By Ramy Annawie.

Bandstander Norman Nawrocki gave a Kresge Auditorium crowd a good time and something to think about last night at his comic-serious one-man show, "I Don't Understand Women."

The performance was sponsored by the Interfraternity Council as a Residence and Orientation Week event for its members, although it was open to the entire MIT community.

Nearly 700 freshmen and upperclassmen — about half of them women — were on hand to meet Ricky, his girlfriend Nancy, and Nancy's sister, Kathy, on the Couch — or, "When the Girlfriend Gets Serious" — a.k.a. a Doctor Ruth-esque Mrs. Robinson — gave a front-row male freshman an interactive lesson in how to excite a woman to orgasm.

But other skits were deadly serious. At one point, two characters had to come to terms with the rape or abuse of their sisters.

"I think the part about the rape was done pretty well," said Julie K. Hsieh '97. Nawrocki "was pretty serious about that, and that was good," she said. "It's important to realize that every girl could be someone's sister." That device made the performance more real, she said.

Performance received positively

"I thought it was a pretty decent production, for being a one-person production," said Grant I. Ho '97. "It raised some issues that men do encounter in society" — like homosexuality, rape, and sex. "It gave a good example of what men should be aware of," he said.

"I thought it was good that he covered a lot of issues, but I thought it was bad that he made having sex sound like the norm," Hsieh said. "He was trying to make fun of stereotypes, but it sounded like at the same time, he was perpetuating them."

After the performance, Nawrocki, who makes a living playing in the rock band Rhythm Activism, explained his motivation for giving the performance.

"It's tough sometimes to address questions about love, sex, rape, and commitment," Nawrocki said. The three-year-old show — which he has presented at almost every major university and college campus in Canada — gives people a chance to "deal with men's issues we normally don't while we're too busy being men," he said.

City Days Promotes Public Service

City Days, from Page 1

care and willingness to be helpful in increasing educational opportunities for the children of Cambridge," he said.

City Days is particularly important for freshman, Purinton said. "The earlier they realize the importance of community service, the more likely they are to get involved," she said.

Purinton said that many neighboring public school students see MIT as an "untouchable thing," so a place "where they build bombs." City Days allows these students to visit MIT for a day and see what the college really has to offer, she said.

Parravano said that since MIT is so strong in education, City Days provides "an opportunity to share the riches MIT has in its talented student body and faculty with teachers and school children."

The Public Service Center planned today's City Days program as a kickoff event for its yearly programs, Purinton said. Many of the center's programs are geared towards education, she said.

Interested students are invited to continue the connection with the Cambridge students throughout the year, she said.

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The Lutheran and Episcopal Ministry at MIT

The Rev. James A. Grant, Episcopal Chaplain — 253-2092; Sagamore Hall, MIT

The Rev. B. Allen Hegen, Lutheran Chaplain — 253-2325; hegen@mit.edu

Non-student visitors are welcome. Programs and services are held in the MIT Chapel 53-11 (Freeport Street). Service times are listed at the MIT Chapel website: http://mit.edu/leu/www/home.htm1

Rev. B. Allen Hegen, Lutheran-Episcopal Ministry at MIT, 53-11 (Freeport St.) is located in Cambridge, Mass. Call 253-2325 for details. It is open to the MIT community and the public. Group or individual counseling is available. Material is available on request. Non-student visitors are welcome. Programs and services are held in the MIT Chapel 53-11 (Freeport Street). Service times are listed at the MIT Chapel website: http://mit.edu/leu/www/home.htm1. Phone 253-2325 for further information.

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Incoming graduate students attend a picnic in Killian Court yesterday, with students seated according to the departments indicated on the white signs. The event was hosted by the Graduate Student Council.

Student Job Opportunities

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Frosh Essay Passing Rate Nosedives; Math Scores Rise

Margaret S. Enders. Of the 1,115 students taking the test, 652 received adequate scores, Enders said. Thirteen percent, or 149 freshmen, showed weakness in one area, and 28 percent, or 314 students, had weaknesses in two areas or scored below a 70, she said. The average score was 78, and students finished the exam in an average time of 56 minutes, 31 minutes fewer than last year's average time, Enders said.

On the whole, students did well," Enders said. "The general sense [among mathematics professors] was that they were happy because a lot of students did well," she said.

One reason for the large improvement from last year was that the test was fairer and "not as complicated as last year," Enders said.

A low score on the diagnostic test was read by two scorers, Perelman said. The average scores were added together and normalized to a mean of 70 and a standard deviation of 10, he said. The "acceptable" cutoff point this year was moved to 79, up 7 points from last year, he said.

Unlike the previous three years, there was no "conditional" pass, Perelman said. The score of "conditional pass" was meant to be a three-year experiment.

Under a conditional pass, students had to attend a two-hour workshop to review the minor flaws in their essays. The committee "decided it was not worth the effort," he said.

Students do well in math test

The Pre-Calculus Diagnostic covered algebra, geometry and analytic geometry, trigonometry, logarithms, exponents, and complex numbers, said Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs

“doesn’t mean that students are going to do badly,” Enders said.

"MIT students are smart," she said. However, students who receive a low score on the exam should be more deliberate in selecting a physics class, Enders said. The physics department recommends that students with scores lower than a 50 should take the version of

Physics I (8.01L) that extends through the Independent Activities Period, she said.

The trigonometry section in particular is "the area where there is an indicator of performance later," Enders said. "We have seen a tendency that a really low score on the math diagnostic increases chances of failing physics," she said.
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Freshmen dropped off their completed preregistration forms yesterday in Lobby 10 as the beginning of the academic year approaches.
**Desperado**

Written and directed by Robert Rodriguez. Starring Anthony Banderas, Salma Hayek, and Joaquin de Almeida. Sony Cheri.

If you haven’t yet heard of Robert Rodriguez, you should take note of his first film, Desperado. Ostensibly a sequel to, but reputedly a flashier version of, his first film, El Mariachi (Antonio Banderas), who seeks revenge on the drug dealers who killed his woman and maimed his hand in the first film. His story has taken on a mythical quality in the years that have passed: In an introductory segment, a stranger (played by Reservoir Dogs’ Steve Buscemi) wanders into a bar and describes the carnage that El Mariachi has wrought on a bunch of hostile bar patrons in a neighboring town. The gunfighter’s ultimate quarry is the crooked fiacho (Joaquin de Almeida), the man behind the gang from the first film.

It turns out that Buscemi’s character is a friend of El Mariachi, and it helping his cause by trying to inflame his persona. When the gunfighter heads into the next town, the boys in the bar are waiting for him. “We just want to see what’s in the guitar case,” says the bartender (Cheech Marin, perfectly cast). In no time, the bullets start flying and Rodriguez’s quick-cutting camera shots add to the excitement.

Our hero escapes to the street, but not without being tagged in the shoulder, and he’s rescued by the beautiful Carolina (Salma Hayek), a bookshop owner and amateurreur. While he faces immutable enemies on the outside, he takes some comfort with his newfound love interest.

Tongue-in-cheek humor abounds, but other than the spectacular action sequences, the plot is pretty weak. The most philosophical statement in the film is when El Mariachi says to Carolina, “It’s easier to pull a trigger than play guitar; it’s easier to destroy than to create.” It’s probably wise that Rodriguez didn’t try to infuse too much solemnity to the gunfighter’s character, although he does seem remorseful for the killer that he has a sickle.

More often, he gets caught up in the thrill of the moment, like taunting bad guys in the blood-soaked bar (“You missed me!”) or throwing grenades at unsuspecting bad guys in an alley below while making a swift getaway on rooftops.

It looks as though Banderas has finally arrived at the threshold of mainstream box office stardom. After supporting roles in The Mambo Kings and Philadelphia, he proves his worth as a leading man and full-blooded Latin sex symbol. The supporting players are superb, especially Buscemi and Marin: even the master of neo-noir blood and guts himself, Quentin Tarantino, has a bit part as a drug pickup man who tells a joke that befits characters from Tarantino’s other films. Not that all the dialogue is incisive or falling-down hilarious, but you’ll enjoy most of it nonetheless.

The major flaw in this film is the ending, which seemed to have been tacked on in haste after Rodriguez’s special effects budget ran out. However, Rodriguez possesses such an undeniable flair for action scenes and comic pacing that his film is a rollercoaster ride filled with so much enthusiasm that the violence isn’t for the faint of heart, but it is cut with such economies of style as to ensure that you’ll find yourself smiling most of the time anyway.